



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
| 09/975,663 | 10/10/2001 | Kun-Tsang Kuo | 67,200-465 | 2709 |
| 7590 03/26/2004 | | | | |
| TUNG & ASSOCIATES Suite 120 838 W. Long Lake Road Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302 | | EXAMINER TRAN, HANH VAN | | |
| | | ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER | | |
| | | 3637 | | |

DATE MAILED: 03/26/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/975,663

Applicant(s)

KUO, KUN-TSANG

Examiner

Hanh V. Tran

Art Unit

3637

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-8,10,11,13 and 14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-8,10,11,13 and 14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3,7 and 13 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 3637

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office Action is in response to the request for continued examination (RCE) filed on 12/22/2003.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 11/24/2003 has been entered.

Claim Objections

3. Claims 4, 7, and 13 are objected to because of the following informalities: "8" should be "8 degrees" or "8°". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 5,160,190 to Farrell et al.

Farrell et al discloses a storing movable double-sided rack system having all the elements recited in the above listed claims including a plurality of flat tracks 22, a plurality of storage units 32 having wheels, shelves 16, partitions 18 to form cells and a drive mechanism (col. 5,

Art Unit: 3637

lines 48-50). Farrell et al also discloses that commercial mobile storage systems are typically made from metal. It is inherent that a metal shelving system would be grounded. Therefore, it is inherent that the partitions 18 being electrically connected by connecting to the shelves of the racks and the racks being electrically grounded when the rack wheels contact the flat tracks. The recitation of a newly discovered function or property inherently possessed by things in the prior art does not cause a claim drawn to these things to distinguish over the prior art.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

8. Claims 3-4, 6-8, 10-11, and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Farrell et al in view of USP 6,247,769 to Spitzer.

Farrell et al discloses all the elements as discussed above except for sloped shelves directed inside the racks, wherein said slope is about 8 degrees.

Art Unit: 3637

Spitzer teaches the idea of a mobile rack having a plurality of sloped shelves 125 directed inside the racks in order to prevent cargo spillage. Since the references are from the same field of endeavor, it would have been obvious to one skill in the art to modify the structure of Farrell et al by having the shelves sloped toward the inside of the racks in order to prevent cargo spillage, as taught by Spitzer, since both teach alternate conventional mobile rack structure, thereby providing structure as claimed. In regard to the slope being about 8 degrees, since applicant fails to disclose the criticality of having the shelves sloping at this specific angle, having the shelves sloping at this specific angle merely amounts to a matter of engineering choice and thus, while being a difference, does not serve in any way to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the applied prior art of Farrell et al, as modified by Spitzer.

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed 11/24/2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In response to applicant's arguments on page 10, paragraph #1 of the amendment that Farrell et al lacks an electrical connection between what it is intended to hold and the ground through cells, shelving and racks, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., boxes of reticles) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

10. In response to applicant's arguments on page 11 that Farrell "does not operate to electrically connect the inside portion of the rack between the partitions to ground", the examiner take the position that Farrell teaches all the limitations recited in the independent claims for

Art Unit: 3637

providing electrical connection between the rack and the ground of metallic cells/partitions placing on the metallic shelves of the metallic racks.

11. In response to applicant's arguments on page 12 that the vertical partitions 18 of Farrell extended from a top wall to a bottom wall of the storage unit, the examiner take the position that the disclosure and drawing of Farrell does not provide such allegation, and drawing figure 1 appears to show that the partitions 18 are placed inside each shelf 16.

12. In response to applicant's arguments on page 13 regarding the transitional phrases "consisting essentially of" "expressly excludes the electrical equipment and safety bar 40" of the Farrell reference, the examiner take the position that as stated in MPEP 2111.03: "The transitional phrase "consisting essentially of" limits the scope of a claim to the specified materials or steps "and those that do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristic(s)" of the claimed invention. *In re Herz*, 537 F.2d 549, 551-52, 190 USPQ 461, 463 (CCPA 1976) (emphasis in original) (Prior art hydraulic fluid required a dispersant which appellants argued was excluded from claims limited to a functional fluid "consisting essentially of" certain components. In finding the claims did not exclude the prior art dispersant, the court noted that appellants' specification indicated the claimed composition can contain any well-known additive such as a dispersant, and there was no evidence that the presence of a dispersant would materially affect the basic and novel characteristic of the claimed invention. The prior art composition had the same basic and novel characteristic (increased oxidation resistance) as well as additional enhanced detergent and dispersant characteristics.). "A 'consisting essentially of' claim occupies a middle ground between closed claims that are written in a 'consisting of' format and fully open claims that are drafted in a 'comprising' format." *PPG Industries v. Guardian*

Art Unit: 3637

Industries, 156 F.3d 1351, 1354, 48 USPQ2d 1351, 1353-54 (Fed. Cir. 1998). See also *Atlas Powder v. E.I. duPont de Nemours & Co.*, 750 F.2d 1569, 224 USPQ 409 (Fed. Cir. 1984); *In re Janakirama-Rao*, 317 F.2d 951, 137 USPQ 893 (CCPA 1963); *Water Technologies Corp. vs. Calco, Ltd.*, 850 F.2d 660, 7 USPQ2d 1097 (Fed. Cir. 1988). For the purposes of searching for and applying prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103, absent a clear indication in the specification or claims of what the basic and novel characteristics actually are, "consisting essentially of" will be construed as equivalent to "comprising." See, e.g., *PPG*, 156 F.3d at 1355, 48 USPQ2d at 1355 ("PPG could have defined the scope of the phrase 'consisting essentially of' for purposes of its patent by making clear in its specification what it regarded as constituting a material change in the basic and novel characteristics of the invention."). See also *In re Janakirama-Rao*, 317 F.2d 951, 954, 137 USPQ 893, 895-96 (CCPA 1963). If an applicant contends that additional steps or materials in the prior art are excluded by the recitation of "consisting essentially of," applicant has the burden of showing that the introduction of additional steps or components would materially change the characteristics of applicant's invention. *In re De Lajarte*, 337 F.2d 870, 143 USPQ 256 (CCPA 1964). See also *Ex parte Hoffman*, 12 USPQ2d 1061, 1063-64 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989) ("Although 'consisting essentially of' is typically used and defined in the context of compositions of matter, we find nothing intrinsically wrong with the use of such language as a modifier of method steps. . . [rendering] the claim open only for the inclusion of steps which do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed method. To determine the steps included versus excluded the claim must be read in light of the specification. . . . [I]t is an applicant's burden to establish that a step practiced in a prior art method is excluded from his claims by 'consisting essentially of' language.").

Art Unit: 3637

13. In response to applicant's arguments on page 14 that Spitzer "shows no concern whatsoever about electrostatic properties", the examiner take the position that Spitzer is shown for the teaching of sloped shelves for the purpose of preventing cargo spillage, therefore whether Spitzer shows any concern or not about electrostatic is not of issue here.

Conclusion

14. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Armentrout, Iizuka, Quinn et al, Querengasser all show structures similar to various elements of applicant's disclosure.

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hanh V. Tran whose telephone number is (703) 308-6302. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, and alternate Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on (703) 308-2486. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

HVT
March 21, 2004


Hanh V. Tran
Art Unit 3637